

Minority Statement
SR 520 Workgroup

We do not support the recommendations on the design nor the financing strategy for SR 520. We feel it is necessary to issue this statement because the recommendations do not accomplish the goal of maximizing the region's transportation and transit systems in a manner that adequately addresses the concerns of the communities most directly impacted by the project. Further, the deadlines set for the completion of the supplemental draft environmental impact statement and the 2014 bridge opening are artificial and do not encourage resolution of the issue. Absent a commitment to engage in genuine discussion for a more viable option, we recommend that the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) address the immediate safety concerns on the existing bridge and work with the affected neighborhood communities and the City of Seattle to find a long term solution that better serves the region.

Since 2007 we have been negotiating in good faith to make significant investments for a bridge project that—in addition to addressing safety concerns and increasing capacity—would create effective connections for bus rapid transit to the light rail station at the University of Washington. The design option recommended by the Workgroup does not accomplish this goal. Option A+ depends on a second bascule drawbridge crossing the Montlake Cut to provide transit connection to Montlake Boulevard from the SR 520 corridor. Dependence on a drawbridge that is subject to unpredictable openings for up to 18 hours a day, interrupts the flow of traffic and can hardly be considered an "effective connection" as required by RCW 47.01.408. To be effective, a transit solution must minimize delays and maximize connectivity. Option A+ does neither. Rather it compounds the problem by causing additional damage to the neighborhoods of our district.

In addition to our concerns about transit, we will point out that none of the options reviewed by the Workgroup can be completely funded under the Workgroup's recommended financing strategy. This strategy is based on the hope that state and federal funds will materialize and also assumes that the Legislature will vote to authorize high tolls on both SR 520 and Interstate 90. Even with high tolling, financing for option A+ falls short, when the total cost of the project (construction and interest cost on bonds) are taken into account. A complete and realistic financing plan will take time. Therefore, there is no need to rush and move forward on a flawed design option based on artificial deadlines set by WSDOT.

Finally, we are disappointed that the Workgroup missed the opportunity to reach a solution for SR 520 that is right for the region and respectful of those directly impacted by the project. The residents of the communities we represent see the traffic jams every day. They are the ones who will live with years of construction. Option A+ will not alleviate these concerns; rather it will bring adverse traffic, noise, and environmental issues to the area. We can and should do better.

On behalf of the communities in our district we state our strong opposition to Option A+ and recommend that the immediate focus be placed on addressing the safety concerns via retrofit or rebuild of the existing four-lane bridge from Madison Park to I-5. This can be done for less cost and similar timing as the group's recommended option. We will continue to work with the

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State, the City of Seattle and the Governor to move forward on a final design that best ensures safety, neighborhood protections, and transit integration.

We will provide additional information and materials to support our position.

Respectfully submitted,

Speaker Frank Chopp,
State Representative 43rd District

Jaime Pedersen,
State Representative, 43rd District